

THE SECOND
SERMON,

Preached to the Honourable

House of

COMMONS,

April 30. 1645.

DISCOVERING

The *Vanity* and *Mischief* of the
Thoughts of an Heart *unwashed*.

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*JER. 4. 14. — How long ſhall thy vaine Thoughts
lodge within thee!*

THese words make the second Branch of this
Verse. They containe a sharp biting *Expro-*
bration of *Jerusalem*, for harbouring ſo long
within their unwaſhen *Hearts*, a multitude
of *Vaine*, destructive *Thoughts* which did
hinder that effectuall *Repentance* to which he
Exhorteth them in the former part of this
Text, and way-laid that *ſalvation* which he propoundeth to
them as the fruit of that *Duty*.

Some variety there is (yet no jarring) among Interpre-
tors in tranſlating ſome of the originall words. That which
our Tranſlators render *vaine thoughts*, ſome tranſlate *Thoughts*
of *vanity*; ſome, *thoughts* of *grief*, *trouble*, or *affliction*; ſome,
Thoughts,

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thoughts of iniquity. These, and more acceptations of the Hebrew word *Aven*, I find in the Old Testament. And no marvel: for *thoughts of vanity* are thoughts of *iniquity*; therefore thoughts of *grief, trouble, and vexation*, in regard of the certain issue and consequence of them all. Howbeit, because the *vanity* of them is that which is most eminent, yet least observed, and acknowledged, the most judicious and exact Expositors translate it *vaine thoughts*, or (which is more full and most expressive of the Originall) *thoughts of vanity*: that is, so *vaine*, as they are indeed *vanity it self*; and so they carry in their forehead, brand sufficient to make all wise men more careful to cast them and expell them.

In generall, the *thoughts* here complained of were such *vanities* as those people fed upon, when they heard of a Captivity threatned, or determined, and were invited to a thorough Repentance and Reformation, if not to prevent when it was too late, yet to alleviate and improve the Judgement, that they might be *saved* in it, and out of it, and to become gainers by it. They, instead of receiving instruction, and taking warning, pleased themselves with building Castles in the aire, sometimes perswading their hearts, the Judgement would not come; or, not yet; or if it did, it would not last long; or if it should, they had already resolved to take sanctuary in *Egypt*: and, if somewhat must be done in a way of repentance, they would outwardly humble themselves in prayer and *fasting* before the Lord, *yearly, monethly**, or so often as he pleased. In the meane time, their *hearts* were neglected, no care was taken for the *cleansing* of them; witnesse these, and many more *thoughts of vanity* that still lodged in them, and were willingly harboured and entertained by their inner man, which hindered all the good they expected, and bound them faster to, and held them longer under all that evill which they were most unwilling to hear of, and most desirous to avoid.

* Zech. 7. 5.
8. 19

לילה from לילית
לילה

Jer. 14. 8.
Isay. 10. 28.

2. The next word to be opened is *salin* (from *lut*) here translated *lodge*, because of the affinity it hath with *lail*, which signifies *night*, and so is often rendred *lodging*, in allusion to *way-faring men*, or others that stay or lodge all night in a place: intending

intending hereby the commorance and permanency of these *vaine thoughts* in vaine men, not for a small time, but for continuance. It is true, the originall word is of the singular number, to note perhaps the concentrating of all manner of *vaine thoughts* in one, (as many *devils* in the possessed man made up one *Legion*;) howbeit, as the Learned note in the exposition of it, we must apprehend a trope in this expression, *pernoctabis* (as *Tremelius* renders it,) being put for *pernoctabunt*, (as *Paginnus*, well) that is, shall remaine and continue there, without any endeavour to dispossesse or remove them.

3. The last word to be unfolded is *bekirbech*, which is here translated *within thee*. The Originall is very emphaticall, because it imports an entertaining of these thoughts in the very center or inmost closet of the soul: whence, some read it, *in interiori tui*, in the inmost part of thee; others, *in medio tui*, in the midst of thee, even in that part in which God himself, when the soul is prepared, delights more especially to reside and dwell. But I shall hold you no longer in the exposition of the words, which are not very obscure. What is here wanting shall be supplied in prosecuting the *Observations*, which are these three. צקרבך Zeph. 3. 17.

1. God doth as strictly observe and severely censure all inward *sinfull Thoughts*, although never so secret, as he doth outward acts of sin.

2. When God resolves to scourge a Nation for their sins, it is usually very long ere they take the right course for their own deliverance.

3. God keeps exact reckoning of the time, and accounts it very long, and takes all delays ill wherein men, under judgments, are projecting ways of their own for their deliverance, and so withstand those of his appointment.

The first of these is obvious to every eye in the surface of the Words; the two other arise naturally from the Scope of the Holy Ghost in the words of the Text.

1. *Observ.*

1. God doth *as strictly observe*, and *severely censure* all inward sinfull *Thoughts*, although never so secret, as he doth outward acts of sin.

HE that runs may read this in the Letter of the Text. No need therefore, to sweat in the proving of the Point. Rather my labour shall be to shew unto you. 1. What those *Thoughts* be, for kind (not number, for they are innumerable) which the Lord thus *observeth* and *censureth*. 2. The grounds why he is so *strict* and *severe* therein.

1. *What*
Thoughts
are.

For the better understanding of the former, we must know that, in holy Writ, *Thoughts* are taken sometimes more *largely*, sometimes more *strictly*.

1. More *largely*, for all the inward motions, actings and workings of the soul, opposed to what ever is acted by the outward man, whether they be inquiries, suggestions, or reasonings about the truth or falsehood, goodnesse or badnesse, benefit or discommodity of the object about which the mind is busied; or whether they be desires after it, or averſeness from it, intentions or resolutions to prosecute, or shunne it, according as the difficulties or necessities of attaining, or avoiding of it, do presse upon us. So that, sometimes the Causes, sometimes the Effects of our thoughts do put on and bear the name of *Thoughts*. Thus that known place, *I say* 66. 18. (I know *their works* and *their thoughts*) is commonly interpreted by all that treat of this subject. So likewise *wisdom* and *skill* in the invention of curious works, is called *thinking of thoughts*, *Exod.* 35. 35. as the Originall hath it. Care also is stiled *thought*, take no *thought*, *Matth.* 6. 25. *Counsels* for the bringing to passe our thoughts, are called *Thoughts*, *Psal.* 5. 10. The forging, framing, contriving of any thing, in our mind which our thoughts naturally run upon, is called *thought*, and *imagination of the thoughts*, and looked upon and censured by the Lord, as *evil*, *Genes.* 6. 5. In this latitude, and with like censure the *thoughts* of wicked men are mentioned, *I say* 35. 6. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*, comprehending under *thought* what ever

of the Thoughts.

3
1. *Observa.*

ever is contra-distinct to outward acts and words.

2. More strictly and properly, *Thoughts* are those inward actings and movings of the Intellect, being formed and forged in the *mind* or *spirit* of man, distinguished from the *heart* or *will*; albeit, in common use of speech, the *heart* being the seat of the affections and fountaine of all action, which sets the *mind* on work to frame and contrive *thoughts*, is the reputed parent of all our thoughts, which are therefore called usually, *thoughts of the heart*. The *mind*, intellect, *spirit*, which is the supreme and most sublime faculty in mans soul, is the proper seat, and shop, wherein the soul frames all her *thoughts* properly so termed. Thus, all those movings of the mind, which we call intuitions, inventions, inquiries, speculations, meditations, reasonings, enterviewes, contemplations, porings, ponderings of the intellectuall faculty, which it frames within it self by it own intuitive power to look into intelligible objects, whether by intelligible species of the things themselves without the help of phantasy, or as assisted by the phantasy and senses, presenting the object to the intellect in some sensible representation: So is *thought* taken, and (being evil) condemned, *Dent. 15. 9. Beware that there be not a thought* (or word; for, a thought is the inward talk or discourse) *in thy wicked heart*: that is, (such a thought as breeds an heart void of pity and compassion towards a brother in distress; and is there opposed not only to outward acts of giving him nothing, but to an evil eye, that is, to want of pity which is properly an act of the heart, attributed to the eye by a metonymy, because the eye turns away, where the heart turns not towards the object. And so we find *thoughts* restrained, *Psal. 139. 2. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off*: That is, the actings and workings of the Intellect and Spirit in man, which afford matter for the heart (that first sets the mind on work) to work upon.

The learned sometimes distinguish

1. Between *Copiation*, and *Imagination*; this being the act of phantasy which by help of the senses, frameth multitudes of Ideas or sensible Images of things in her own shop, and

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1. *Obfero.*
Cogitatio quafi
animi cogitatio,
i. e. mentis agi-
tatio.

then presenting them to the *Intellect*: the other being an act or agitation of the *mind*, not forming any sensible Image there, but pondering, and looking into even sensible (as well as other) things, in an intellectuall way. Thus the Apostle seems to put a difference between the *Imagination*, and *Thoughts*; that, *exalting it self against the knowledge*; this, *against the obedience of Christ*, 2. Cor. 10. 5. Howbeit, these are often put promiscuously one for another; especially, *Imaginations* passe for *Thoughts*, because the phantasy, the immediate framer of the imaginations, doth present the mind with such continued multitudes of them, that mans *Intellect* hardly acts any thing without them: therefore are the thoughts called the *imagination of mans heart*, Gen. 8. 21.

Aquin. 2. 2. q.
 180. ar. 3. Rich.
 de S. Viſt. de
 Contempl. l. 1.
 cap. 4. Gerſon
 par. 3. aliique.

2. Between *Cogitation*, *Meditation*, and *Contemplation*: The first, they make to be a more sudden, short aspect, and confused glance of the mind upon some object, without any fixed inquiry into it, or long debate about it. *Meditation* is a more serious and settled act of the mind upon an object, with all intention and vehemency of spirit labouring to find out the nature and excellency of it, and to dwell and feed upon those thoughts, as pleased with and delighted in them. *Contemplation* is a more sublime, free, intimate, and perspicacious intuition of an object, without such toile as is incident to both the former; yet procuring more delectation to the Contemplator, than either of the other, by how much it is able to penetrate deeper into the nature of the object, acts by a more noble faculty in the beholding of it, and can more exactly and accurately delineate it to the life, by a mere act of the understanding, as if it were actually present to the eye, or really acted by the body, (supposing it to be some sensitive or sensuall thing;) or fully comprehended by the mind, if merely intellectuall, and remote from sense.

This last the Schoole-men usuall apply to the beholding of things Divine, by such as pretend to give themselves to a secluse Profession of *Monks Religion*, for *Contemplation* *et cetera*, sequestering themselves from that secular course of life which they call *Actiue*. But when once it becomes degenerate

rate

rate to the contemplating of wickedness, excogitated, represented, and intellectuall acted in and by the mind, it is of all other the vilest, deepest, most lothsome and most malicious wickedness; because, hereby the noblest and highest faculty is imployed and prostituted (contrary to nature) to the basest and more than brutish drudgery and slavery, far beyond any to which the meanest and most carnall, sensuall brutish part of the vilest man can (all things considered) possibly be exposed. Hence devils are said to outgo men in sinning, because all their sins are of larger compass, higher reach, and deeper dimensions, in regard that their sins be merely spirituall and more intellectuall and contemplative, than mans can be: And hence we usually terme those men who are given up to contemplative wickedness, *devils incarnate*, because thereby they come neerest unto devils, and exceed all other men who trade in more base and sensuall lusts, and cannot reach to such an height in sinning as the former do.

But ordinarily, the sacred Scripture is not so curious thus to distinguish between these three, *Cogitation*, *Meditation*, and *Contemplation*; but, many times under one of them, comprehends the rest; as, under the name of *knowledge* are not seldom included the subsequent acts of all the affections that attend upon it.

3. Divines distinguish *inter cogitationem malam & cogitationem mali*: between an evil thought, and a thought of evil. By the first, they understand such thoughts as are wholly framed in, and arise out of a corrupt heart or mind, as fogs and vapours out of the earth, or scume out of a pot. By the other, they mean such as have their first rise, breath, and injection from *without*. These be either those thoughts inspired by the Holy Ghost, moving us so to think and consider of evil forbidden, as alwayes to fear the defilements of it, to shun and abhorre it: and these *thoughts of evil*, are not evil, but good, and none can be good without them; or else, they are thoughts suggested and injected by Satan, to draw us unto evil; and are sometimes called his *motions*, 1. Sam. 24. 1. *the messengers of Satan*, 2. Cor. 12. 7. *the fiery darts of the devill*, Ephes. 6. 16.

These

1. *Observ.* These again, are either such as are not assented to, but rather abhorred by us, as those suggested to our Saviour, *Math. 4.* or they are such to which assent and consent is given by us. The former are no more our sins, than the rape of a chaste Virgin or Matrone that cryed out and did all she could to withstand the wickednesse and violence offered to her, is to be accounted her sin. But the latter are no lesse our sins, than the child is the mothers that conceived it, as well as the fathers that begat it. Satan first filled the heart of *Ananias* to ly to the Holy Ghost, *Act. 5. 3.* that is, he begat that prodigious monster upon the heart of *Ananias*; but, by consent unto it, *Ananias* is charged with it, as the mother of it, having conceived this in his heart, *ver. 4.* Thus *David*, by yeelding unto Satan who provoked him to number the people, *1. Chro. 21. 8.* confesseth the sin to be his own, *ver. 9.* I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing. Satan begat it, but *David* bare it and brought it forth, as the prodigious conception of his succumbing heart.

Now, all these, which are not from God, but any way our own, whether Imaginations, Cogitations, Meditations, or Contemplations of evil, together with all injections of Satan, consented unto by us, be they never so subtle, spirituall, (I mean simply and purely intellectuall, if naturall) and abstracted from all commerce and intelligence with, and actings by the exterior senses, or members of the body; and ly they never so close and secret in the highest, or inmost closet of the soul, that no eye, but Omniscience it self can possibly discover and disclose them, do fall under as strict Observation, and severe censures of the Lord, as any outward acts of sin whatsoever. Thus you see what are the *Thoughts* here complained of, and censured.

2. The Grounds why it is so.

1. The Thoughts are vain, and that in a threefold regard.

2. The Grounds of the point come next to be considered. And they are such as I shall now dig out of the Quarry of the Text it self.

1. They be *vaine*; yea, *thoughts of vanity*. And this, if fully understood, is enough to condemn them; for they are *vaine* in so many respects as render them justly odious to the righteous

righteous God: I shall reduce their vanity to three heads.

1. They are *vaine* in regard of their frothy worthlessness, having no solidity or value in them. They are like the fumes of the Sea, the froth of a furnace, that hath neither substance, nor profit in it. Thus, that is called *vaine*, which cannot profit, or do any good, 1 Sam. 12, 21. Such are the naturall thoughts of the ablest men. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the Wise, that they are *vaine*, 1 Cor. 3, 20. so *vaine*, that they make the heart little worth, (Prov. 10, 20.) and the man himself that entertaines them, to be lighter than vanity, Psal. 61, 9. so light, and empty, that the very shadow of the wind will turn the ballance in which he is weighed, and cause him to be found wanting. Dan. 6, 27.

1. Of their unprofitableness.

2. They are *vaine*, in respect of the folly, yea madness of them. So *vanity* is taken, 2 Sam. 6, 20, where David is charged by his malignant wife Achish, when he daunced before the Ark, that he shamefully uncovered himself as one of the *vaine fellows* (that is, the fools) of Israel. The multitude, swiftnesse, variety, confusèdness of the thoughts of proud, amorous, or discontented men, fire their spirits, dry up the naturall moisture of the braine, banish sleep, disturb the phantasie, and distract the intellect, crack and wound the principles of reason, and so make men phreneticall and naturally mad, depriving them of the right use of their Reason, and causing them to mistake, invert, and pervert every thing in their apprehensions, discourses, and actions. Thus, do *vaine thoughts* disturb, distract, insatiate, and make men no less wild and mad in spirituall respects also, that when *vaine men* would be wise, they become *vaine* in their imaginations, professing themselves wise, they become fools, Rom. 1, 21, 23. and such fools as are likewise over-run with desperate spirituall madness. For they that in matters of the world can manage business like rational and well accomplisht men, in the matters of God, in the business of their souls, cannot see their way, nor act like reasonable creatures; but rather, like naturall bruis beasts, made and taken to be destroyed, do corrupt themselves even in the things which they know naturally, as the Apostle Jude speaketh. This

2. Of their folly and madness.

1. Pet. 2, 12. Jude 10.

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1. Of their

wickedness.

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wickedness.

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moved the wife man, in his search after the wickedness of folly, to couple foolishness and madness together. Eccles. 7. 25. and to render this account of his inquiries: that in the folly of men who are evil, madness is in their hearts while they live, Eccles. 9. 2. that is, in regard of the vanity of their thoughts touching heavenly things.

3. They are vain in regard of the wickedness of them. So the Scriptures sometimes decipher out a wicked person by calling him a vain man. Such were those vain men gathered unto Jeroboam, that is, sons of Belial, as it is interpreted, 2. Chron. 13. 7. Thus David refusing to sit with ungodly persons, Psal. 36. 4. expounds himself to mean thereby, the wicked, ver. 5. Therefore the same Hebrew word which in this Text is translated vain, is often put for sin and wickedness. So Job 11. 14. If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacle. And in Isai. 59. 6. their works are works of iniquity, because all iniquity is misdirection, a meer lye, a vanity; it promiseth that content satisfaction, happiness unto a man that it can never performe, but merely deludes, rides, and robs him, leading him as a fool to the stocks, and as an ox to the chambers, ere he discover or suspect the deceitfulness of sin. Hence that irrefragable Conclusion of the wisest man, Prov. 24. 2. the thought of foolishness is sin: that is, not onely such thoughts as get the consent of the will, or that tickle the heart with some kind of delight, albeit consent be not yet obtained; but even the shortest, unpremeditated, unexpected sudden motions of the mind unto any particularly arising in, and from the heart, and the privity of it unto will, although they never lodge there at all, but are instantly suppressed and expelled, so soon as discovered. These, I say, are such Thoughts as are properly sin.

It is true, the Thoughts I have now to deal against, are such as lodge in us. But yet these are not the onely vain, or sinfull thoughts in man. I may therefore hence raise an Argument a minori, to confirme the point in hand. For, if Thoughts not consented to, not allowed of, nor permitted to harbor or lodge in the heart so much as for a moment, after they be desisted,

be

be truly fins: then, much more those *Thoughts* which have gained consent, or at least are pleasing to the heart, and are suffered to lodge there so long as they will, are properly and formally fins.

But such are the former, as is evident, thus. The least aberration or swerving from the Rule of the Law, is a transgression of it, and so a *sin*: for, *sin is the transgression of the Law*, 1. Joh. 3. 4. Such is any *evil* thought, never so short, because it deviates from the Law that requires us to love the Lord with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the strength, and with all the mind, Luk. 10. 27. which Law is violated, where any *thought* tending to *evil*, at any time ariseth in the heart or mind: for, at that time all the heart and mind is not for God. Besides, I know no solid Divine but admits Original Corruption to be *sin* in all the motions of it: therefore such are all *Thoughts* proceeding from it. *As is the mother, so is her daughter*, saith the Hebrew Proverb. Herodias and Sodomie are both of a kinde; If the tree be *evil*, so is the fruit. The dimme light of depraved Nature holds forth as much. Hence *Thales* could see and say, *even qui vel cogitat malum, non latere Deum*. He that but thinks an *evil* thought, is not hid from God. Now, *cogitare est minus quam cupere*, saith Saint *Augustine*, to think is lesse than to desire. Notorious also is that of the Poet,

Nemoque sceler in se tacitum qui cogitat ullum;

Falsi crimen habet.

He that within himself but thinks amisse,

Of sinfull fact committed that man guilty is.

The Spartan *Glaucus* (although famous for justice in other particulars) paid dear for but an attempt of retaining the *Messene* money committed to his custody by their Father, for which himself and Family was destroyed, although he kept it not. Which ruine when he sought to prevent by asking pardon for his offence, with promise to restore the money, (as he afterwards did) he received this short and sharp answer from the Oracle, *neque dicitur ulli deo, vel ulli homini, per se. To tempt God, and to commit the fact, is all one. To conceive a*

thought

Herodot. lib. 6.
cap. 86.

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1. Observe. thought of evil, is to do it, in the account of him that is to judge it.

It is now, I suppose, clear enough that even the lightest, shortest transient *thoughts* of evil, naturally arising from the heart, even where no consent is given to, nor delight taken in them, are truly sins.

Their wickedness appears in 7. particulars.

1. They are the first evils committed by man.

But to leave these, and to return to those *vaine thoughts* which have obtained entertainment and lodging too too long. That these are properly sins, and deserve as sharp a censure as outward Acts, may appear yet further from these following Grounds.

1. These are the first evils that ever were committed against God, whether by Angels or man. The first sin of *Angels* did not consist in any outward bodily Act, but in the inward miscarriage and deviation of their *understandings* and *wills*: (whether the particular sin were Pride, or Envy, or Ambition, or Malice, or Unfaithfulness, or all,) for they are not capable of external Acts of corporall Agents, without the assumption or assistance of some kinde of bodies for the manifestation of their presence and operations unto us. The Apostle *Peter* saith, *they sinned*; 2. *Pet. 2. 4.* And *Jude* tells us, *they kept not their first Estate, or Dignity*, but left their *own habitation*. This must needs be the sin of their *minds* and *wills* against that Law which God prescribed to them, they having no bodily Organs to act any thing against God, in Heaven, in an external manner: therefore is their sin called *spirituall wickedness* in high, or heavenly places, *Ephes. 6. 12.* Yet even for this sin of their *thoughts*, what ever it were, *And cast them down to Hell*, and reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgement of the great day. Wherin the Apostles seem to intimate some extraordinary judgement whereunto those Angels are appointed; which supposeth that their wickedness, which was *spirituall*, was therefore greater, because inward and more *spirituall*.

And as for *Man*, that his first sin began in the actual aversion of his *thought*, and contemplation from off his Maker, is not doubted by any. It is a School-conclusion * that sin is properly in the soul onely, as being the proper subject both of grace

* Aquin. 1. 2. q. 83. ar. 1. in conclus.

grace and sin, as such; the body is but the instrument to produce it into some outward acts. All mans actions that are voluntary, have their first rise from the *heart*; and *Thought* is the first motion of the heart thereunto. Nor that the first evil thought in *Adam* arose from any previous corruption in his nature, but from the voluntary choice and act of his own will (not before corrupted, but) by that act becoming corrupt. Howbeit afterwards, all the evil of his thoughts and actions sprung from the corruption of his nature, by that first act contracted. To this purpose, *Aquinas* well, *primò persona infecta naturam, deinde natura infectis personam*. At first, the person corrupted the nature; then, the nature (so corrupted) corrupts the person yet further by putting him on to more actual sins. So that as *evil thoughts* are now the first born of Original sin; so Original sin it self began in a *Thought*, which therefore must needs be a *sin*; not of an ordinary size, but out of measure sinfull, that lets in such a world of sin at the heeles.

2. These *Thoughts* argue an heart not yet washed from wickednesse. Witnesse the former part of the present Text collated with this second branch. There, he exhorts to *wash* the heart from wickednesse; here, he shews what was that wickednesse that he would have them to wash out; namely, *thoughts of vanity*, which while they lodged in their hearts, declared them to be yet not washed from their filthinesse. Not but that they who are washed most thoroughly, are sometimes haunted with Legions of those unclean spirits, while they remain in this world; witnesse holy *Paul*, in the seventh to the *Romanes*. But the difference between them & others who are altogether unwashed in heart, is this, They that are washed, do not give those thoughts any place so much as for an houre; nor cordial welcome in their hearts at all; much lesse do they willingly permit them to lodge there for a night if they can avoid it; but do their best to thrust them out of doores by head and shoulders, so soona as they appear (if they be able) with hatred and detestation of all the brood of them. *I have vaine thoughts, but they doe not I love*, saith one of them that was washed, yet

2. They argue an unclean heart.

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1. *Observ.*
3. God calls
men to repent
of them.

not wholly freed from *thoughts of vanity*, *Psal. 119. 113.*

3. God calls men to repent of their *Thoughts*, (which argues them to be *sins*;) not without a sad intimation of the difficulty of their Pardon. Repent of this wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee, said Peter to Simon Magus, *Acts 8. 22. because he thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.* It was not so much his profer of money, as that thought which moved him thereunto, that Peter so much condemned in him. The baseness of his thought opened his purse: so that, his heart was chief in this trespass. In which regard, evill thoughts are greater abominations in Gods eye, than outward acts abstracted from such thoughts and propensions of the inner man to that wickedness which is outwardly acted. And this makes the same outward act of sin more or lesse difficult to be pardoned unto one man, than to another, *viz.* as the thoughts of the heart have been more or lesse active to affect and contrive it, and to shew more or lesse inward malice or obstinacy in the committing of it.

4. They are the
bane of every
action.

4. *Vaine thoughts*, are the bane or prejudice of every good action, bold intruders into every place; impudent disturbers of every duty, so that we cannot do the things that we would, through the *lustings* of the flesh, that is, the actual motions and agitations of originall corruption sending forth whole Armies of *vaine thoughts* against the Spirit, within us. They haunt and dog us to the Table, to the Bed, to the Closet, to the Church, to every place; what ever we are doing, they put in, and distract us. When I would do good, evil is present with me, saith that great Apostle, *Rom. 7. 21.* And so must we, who may sooner chase away the devill himself, than our own thoughts, at such a time. And when they are present, they often times over-bear us; like the Sons of *Zeruah* they are too hard for David. If Gods Spirit suggest any thing that is good; these, like *Diotrephes*, love to have the prebeminence, and will not receive it, nor suffer the soul that would, but cast out what ever is good, if it be in their power. Yea, so do they hinder us in duty, that either they wholly keep back the heart,

or

or carry it far away from the Lord, even when the body is present, and very busie at work upon some externall service, *Mat. 15. 8.* Or, if through the power of grace, the heart will not be at their call, to leave the work; then, these busie attendants dissemble their malice, and seek to mingle themselves with the motions of grace, as the adversaries of *Judah and Benjamin*, *Exra 4. 2.* came to *Zerubbabel* and to the chief of the Fathers, saying, *Let us build with you*, not with any purpose to promote, but only to trouble the building.

5. As they are the first movers unto sin, so are they most indefatigable promoters of it: they are the chief brokers, and panders to all our lusts. They first find out objects and sewell for our lusts, then they not onely kindle, but encrease the flame. They give Law to the Law of our minds, *Rom. 7.* They command all, where they get entertainment. *Thine eyes and thine ears*, (saith the Lord to *Shallum*, *Jer. 22. 17.*) are not bus for thy covetousnesse, &c. Thank vaine thoughts for that. These make every man as violent in his course of evil, even while he is conversant in good duties, as the horse when he rusheth into the battell; so that the good which he would, he doth not, and the evil which he would not, he doth; and he cannot cease from sin, *2. Pet. 2. 14.* *Thy heart is deceitful, and is wicked against God.*

6. They are the onely defilers of the inner man. Those things which come forth from the heart, defile the man. And what are they? evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, *Mat. 23. 35. 19.* All these are begotten there, and defile the wombe, wherein they were conceived, untill it be cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary. And these can defile the soul by contemplative wickednesse, as much, if not more, as when there is liberty to wallow in the mire of externall acts also.

7. They are the first make-bates between God and man, the onely obstructions of good, and inlets of evil that we at any time suffer. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? *1. Jam. 4. 1.* These are the first breeders of all the miseries we suffer here, or in Hell it self. Therefore the same word here

They are indefatigable solicitors for sin.

Jer. 8. 6.
Rom. 7. 19.

6. They are the onely defilers of the inner man.

7. They are the first make-bates between God and man.

1. *Observ.* here which signifies *vanity*, is applied also to signify *affliction*, in the very next verse. For, a voice declareth from Dan, and publishes Aven, affliction from Mount Ephraim. Hence that *Adagio*, my affliction, my affliction; because all afflictions are but the issues of the obliquity of our *Thoughts* and affections. *The wages of sin is death*, Rom. 6. 23. that is, death spiritually, naturall, yea eternall. For, by sin death entered, and passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. 5. 12.

No marvaill then, if the Lord be so strict and severe against those *thoughts*, which have such plenty and variety of *vanity* in them. Nor is this all. For,

2. Reason,
Thoughts are
such as lodge &
stay with us.

2. These *Thoughts* are not galloping Posters that onely call at the doore, and then away on the Spurre; but, they lodge there. That is, 1. They stay there for continuance; not as a traveller that tarrieth onely for a night; but, as an inhabitant that is alwayes resident. Come when ye will, you may be sure to find them. Every imagination of the thoughts of mans heart, as it is onely evil, so is it such continually; or, every day, Gen. 6. 5. And they draw men off from the Lord, by a perpetual backsliding; causing us to hold fast deceit, and to refuse to returne. Jer. 8. 5. 2. They lodge in us, not to sleep and to take their rest, but as beasts of prey, that watch to do evil; being so intent upon it, that they sleep not except they have done mischief: or, if perhaps they take a short nap, yet even that sleep departeth from them, unlesse they cause some to fall. Evil men imagine mischief upon their beds. Their thoughts are awake, and wandering, when their bodies sleep: Yea, they contrive more evil in the bed, than any where else. They are like unto Noahs Daughters, that were never so busie to make their Father drunk, to draw him to further lechery, as in the night. These are the Gibeonites that abuse the strumpet-like heart of man all night untill the morning, and are then most active when others are at rest.

Pro. 4. 16.

3. Reason,
The Thoughts
take up the
chief and
highest part of
the soul.

3. These *thoughts* are no skulking beggars, or inferiour hang-byes, that hover about the doores, or get into some out-houses, or meaner lodgings, and revell and roar it there; but, they possess themselves of the chiefest room, yea of the Throne it self. They lodge in the mind and spirit of man, that

Mat. 5. 28. that, any indignity done to Christ, but in thought, *3. Use of the* shall be taken notice of and judged by him, *wherefore think ye first Observe.* *evil in your heart?* *Mat. 9. 4.* that, ambition in the thoughts causing discontent at others, is observed by Christ, *Mat. 20. 24.* that, *Covetousnesse* is condemned as *Idolatry*, *Col. 3. 5.* not that Covetous men fall down upon their knees to worship their bags, but do inwardly in their thoughts idolize their riches, and place as much, yea more confidence in them, than in God: for, *the rich man's wealth is his strong City, and as an high wall in his own conceit, or thought, Prov. 18. 10.* that, the setting of the wits and thoughts on work, to imagine mischief in the heart, how to blast and take away the good name and honour of another that stands in our way, to contrive the ruine of those to whom we owe thanks and duty, to conceive any disloyalty so much as in thought to those in authority and Government, or malignity against any whom we envy, will be espied, discovered, and punished by the allseeing God, although those thoughts die where they first received life, and no other act follow to the prejudice of him or them, against whom such thoughts were framed. Hence, the Preacher; *Curse not the King, no nor in thy thought, and curse not the rich in thy Bed-chamber; for a bird of the aire shall carry the voice, and that which hath wing shall tell the matter, Eccles. 10. 20.* God is the avenger of all such thoughts, as well as of the things themselves outwardly acted by those that contrive and labour such *vain thoughts* within them.

And there is the more terror in the Judgement, because the judging of *Thoughts*, is Gods own immediate act, as being one of those Reserved Cases that none but God himself can take cognizance of. Even among men, the higher the Court, the weightier the Cause, that is tried there, and the more heavy and dreadfull the sentence. Men judge of matters of fact, that may be proved by witnesse: none but God passeth judgement on the *Thoughts*. This argues the greatnesse of the sins of the *Thoughts*. None but great matters are to be brought before *Moses, Exod. 18. 22.* So is it here. And suitable to the Judge is the judgement, *Can shine bears endure, or can thine hands be*

The Vanity and Mischief

1. *Use of the strong in the dayes that I shall deal with thee,* saith the Lord, *first Observe.* Ezek. 22. 14. Therefore, look to your *Thoughts* and reckon them amongst your greatest sins (if suffered to lodge in you) and so much the greater, by how much you seek to exterminate them; and to allow your selves in them.

2. The right methode of humiliation is to begin from within.

2. This lets us see the right way of performing that great Duty which we are now upon, in this Day of *Humiliation*. It is not onely to look over our externall actions, to confesse and bewaile them, and to return every man from the evill of his outward way; (And yet, O that thus much might once be done, as sometimes by the *Ninivites*!) but it is seriously to reflect also upon the inner man, and to search for the wayes of wickednesse that are within, in the mind and heart; and to forsake not onely the outward acts, but all secret thoughts of sin, if ever we expect pardon and peace from that God that now is in armes against us. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, or, multiply pardon.* *I say* 55. 7.

If therefore old fornicators, old drunkards, deceivers, lyers, &c. think they have done enough when they leave off the outward acts (which perhaps they can continue no longer, for want of strength, money, or opportunity,) albeit they love and hug their old villanies, taking delight in the thoughts of any of these, or other sins, and in the mention of them; Let all such know that however their abstinence from outward wickednesse, may be diverse wayes advantagious to themselves and others in outward respects, (as to *Ahab*, and the *Ninivites*) yet are they still as odious unto God, as when they wallowed in the mire, and *displayed their sins as Sodom* without hiding of them. And the reason is, because the odiousness of the outward act is no more a transgression of the Law, than the inward thoughts which do beget and produce them. Yea, the outward acts committed by the body (the drudge and slave to those lusts which are in the soul,) are but *accessories*, in respect of those *thoughts* within, which in every sin are the *principals*: they are the *Absoloms* that plot and contrive the

the wickedness; the members of the outward man are but as those 200 men that were called out of Jerusalem to follow Absalom, and went in their simplicity to act that Treason which he the Arch-traitor had contrived. Tamar committed a great sin in playing the harlot, and becoming with child by whoredom: yet, of the two, by Judah's own confession, *he was more righteous than he*, because it was his part to have provided for her, and thereby to have prevented that sin which himself solicited her unto, and committed with her. The outward man is but as Tamar; it is Judah, the heart, that is chief in the trespass. *Those things which proceed out of the mouth* (or, which be acted by any other members of the body) *come forth from the heart, and they defile the man*, *Mat. 15. 18*. Therefore unfull thoughts, consented to within, are more abominable, than the outward acts, which are but the product of those inward Thoughts, and must be the matter of our greatest and deepest humiliation, if we would indeed make our peace with God, and receive benefit by this Duty.

The second Use is to reprove and bewaile the huge swarms of vain thoughts that still remain in, and are entertained by not onely such as are openly profane, or supinely careless of the frame of their hearts, but even by too too many of those who pretend unto Godliness, being pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from the filthiness that is within them. On the multitudes of unprofitable, idle, foolish, earthly, wanton, unclean, dissolute, profane, blasphemous, Atheisticall, prodigious thoughts that lodge, and revell it day and night, in the hearts of men! On the adulteries, conspiracies, murders, blasphemies, Atheismes that harbour there, finding hearty welcome & entertainment! Is it not too true that the hearts of most men, are not but for these and other the like abominations? And shall not the Lord visit for these things, and shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation at this? *Jer. 9. 9*. How justly may he go on to smite, and break us, untill he have utterly destroyed us? How well would it become every one of us to weep and bowle, and to make a wayling like dragons, and mourning as

2. Use.
Reproof and lamentation for the vain thoughts of men, that few take notice of.

The Vanity and Mischief

2. Use of the *owl*, * because, even for these things, the Lord hath broken this Land *fore us* in the place of dragons: And fire is gone out of a rod * of her branches, devouring her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a Scepter to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, Ezek. 19. 14.

3. Use.
Exhortation.

1. To deal chiefly against sins of the thoughts in our confessions.

1. King. 22. 31.

The last Use is for Exhortation to a double Duty.
1. In all our confessions and humiliations to deal chiefly against the sins that are within in our hearts; to discover, arraign, and condemn our *vain thoughts*, amongst our greatest transgressions. Think it not enough to confesse outward rebellions against the Lord, but lay open all those Traytors that lodge and live within; yea, as sometimes Benhadad charged his Captains in the day of battell, *fight neither with small, nor great, save onely with the King of Israel*; so let me perswade all, this day, to bestow most pains against those home-bred traytors within our bosomes, *which fight against our souls*, even while they draw our souls to take part with them against the Lord. Let us powre out most water upon that which doth most defile us. Let us dreg them all, this day, to Gods Tribunall, give them their full charge, and let every one be a Samuel to hew these *Agags* in peeces before the Lord, and think it not enough to destroy that which is *vile and refuse*, our outward abominations; and pray we unto God, *if perhaps, the thoughts of our hearts may be forgiven us*.

AE. 8. 22.

2. To labour to get rid of *vain thoughts*.
Isay 55. 7.

2. Labour to get your selves rid of all vain thoughts as much as of the vilest actions. *Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*, is the Councell of God himself, as you have heard before. You see he is very earnest in it here also, thinking it *long* untill it be done. I will not adde any other *Merine* than what I have formerly extracted out of the Text it self in shewing the Grounds of the point.

I shall therefore onely give you some short *Directions* and *helps* to further and carry on this necessary work; and so passe to the remaining points.

4. Directions
so help us in
it.

1. Work the heart to a perfect detestation of all such *Thoughts*, that we may be able to say with David, *Psal. 119. 11. I hate vain thoughts*. This will stir up the heart to more resolution

lution and industry to thrust them out of doores. We need: 3. Use of the
not much persuasion to part with whatsoever we hate. Am. first Obser.
men was never so anxious to procure his faire sister Tamar's
company while he seemed to love her, as he was violent after
once he hated her, to thrust her away, and to command his ser-
vants to smite her out and to hate the device after her. Sam. 13. 17.
And should we once come up to a perfect hatred of those vain
thoughts which haunt us, the sinfulness of them would no
longer be put to our account: (although we should not be
wholly quit of them) but, unto sin that dwelleth in us. Rom.
7. 17. throw it out.

2. Keep the heart above all keepings. Prov. 4. 23. Every
man locks up his cabinet: yea, the very stable, and out-houses,
after once he hath been robbed. If the heart be kept with dili-
gence, vain thoughts cannot have those opportunities and ad-
vantages to lodge, and domineer there, as where the house is
open day and night for all comers. Thus, if we behave our
selves wisely, we may with more confidence say, even of our
very thoughts, as David of his meniall servants, He that work-
eth deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall
not tarry in my sight.

Psal. 101. 7.

3. Store the heart with the knowledge and love of God,
which may take off the thoughts from vanity, and imploy them
better. It is the emptiness of our hearts, that makes them so
full of vanity; as the emptiness of the stomach makes it subject
to be overfull of wind. If therefore the heart were furnished
with the knowledge of God and his Word, that would take up
the heart, and continually talk with it. Prov. 4. 22. and cause
it to hate every false way. Psal. 119. 104. And if the heart were
filled with the love of God and his word, this would so fill the
soul with meditation thereon, as would leave neither room
nor leave for those base companions that now take up all
our thoughts and time. O how I love thy Law, saith David,
what then? this came of it: it is my meditation all the day long.
Psal. 119. 97. Thus a good man out of the good treasure of his
heart, bringeth forth good things. Matt. 12. 35.

4. Commit thy wayes, and heart to Gods keeping, and
that

3. Use of the that will scile and establish those thoughts in thee which the first Obſerv. former means shall produce. *Compt thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established, Prov. 16. 3.* This will draw down a blessing from Heaven, to fix those thoughts that otherwise would fleet and vanish.

3. In every Prayer presented at the Throne of Grace, let one Petition be to be *cleansed from secret sins*; that is, from sins of the thoughts, as well as from other sins which we take no notice of: and, that God would fill the heart with such thoughts as may be accepted of him. This was *David's* course, *Psal. 19.* *Cleanse thou me from secret faults, -- Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.* Nothing but the strength of God who redeemeth us from all iniquity, can cure us of the vanity of the thoughts, and make them such as may be well pleasing to him.

So much of the first Point, whereon I have insisted the longer, because it is of such great and universall concernment, and so little handled, or heeded.

The next point is this:

2. Obſerv. When God resolves to scourge a Nation for their sins, is unusually very long as they take the right course for their own deliverance.

Ierusalem and Judah had been long and well instructed, often threatened, and earnestly invited to repentance, even after judgements resolved upon, yet executed on them for their sins; but all in vain. Now God had determined to give them up unto an iron captivity, yet he ceased not to exhort and importune them to be good to themselves: he prescribed them a way how they might be saved out of that Calamity, and used many Arguments to commend that course unto them. This he doth, often, and long: but they regard it not. Either they give no credit to the threatening, or think themselves wise enough to direct their own way, and so they neglect that which he appointeth. Therefore it is that he thus exhorteth with

with them, and upbraideth them with that sottishness and
madness which did so long possess them: *How long shall thy
vain thoughts lodge within thee?* that is, such thoughts as di-
verted them from the right way to deliverance, and engaged
them in troubles that would prolong their misery.

This had been their manner from their youth up. They were
worse than *Joab*; he stood it out no longer with *Abimelech*, af-
ter his fields were set on fire: But these held out long, after all
was in a flame. For when once they fell to Idolatry, the Lord

often delivered them into the hands of their enemies round about. *Judg.*

3. 12. But they made no haste to make their peace with God,
in his way, but ran a way of their own, and so smurred long
and much, ere they were delivered: sometimes 8. years, as

under *Chusban*, *Isbithabim*, *Judg.* 3. 8. sometimes 18. yeeres,
as under *Eglon*, *King of Moab*, *Judg.* 3. 14. and at another

time as long, under the *Philistines* and *Ammonites*, *Judg.* 10. 8.
And it is remarkable, that all they had been so long plagued,

we read nothing of their crying to the Lord: but so soon as
they once did that, they were delivered. Nor that they did not

at all cry: for they often *howled upon their beds* for the miseries
that were upon them: but they *cryed not unto him with their*

hearts, *Hos.* 7. 14. Thus God complained of *Judah*, (*39. 10.*) *Ju-
dah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but faintly,*

saieth the Lord. So, when God joyned the enemies of *Israel*
against him, the *Syrians* before, and the *Philistines* behind, who

decovered *Israel* with open mouth: not for a short space, but for
a long season, as appears by that expression, *for all this*: the

anger of the Lord is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out
still. The reason, this; for the people *turned not to him abun-*

dantly then, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts: *Isay.* 6.
12. 13.

Now, the maine and generall Ground of all this way their
straining, entertaining, and prosecuting of many vain thoughts

that lodged in them. We must therefore a little further inquire.
What were the Thoughts of this people, wherein did so much

miscarriage.

2. Observ.

1. Of the
Thoughts that
retard deliver-
ance.

Five sorts of
Thoughts hin-
dering the pre-
vention of the
Judgement.

1. The im-
pregnableness
of the City.

* Psal. 132.

13, 14.

2. The Privi-
ledge of the
Temple.

3. The Reasons why such vain thoughts prevailed so long with
them.

1. The Thoughts of Jerusalem which so much misled them, and retarded their deliverance, were either such as bred in them a strong perswasion for a long time together, that the Judgement threatned should not come; or such as, when they saw and found themselves deceived in the former dreames, led them into wayes of their own devising, which could not prevent, but did rather hasten the Judgement, and fasten it longer on them when it fell upon them.

Of the former sort of Imaginations that put on their hearts (and sometimes their tongues also) to give the lye to Gods threatnings, were (among others) these.

1. They vainly apprehended that Jerusalem was impregnable, being so strongly guarded and secured by the Almighty (who had made it his own Imperiall Habitation, and Court of Royall Residence) * that not the hardiest Prince on Earth could ever hope to conquer it. The Kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the Adversary and the enemy should have entred into the gates of Jerusalem, Lam. 4. 12. Hence it was, that so often as Jeremiahs prophecies of violence and spoile, that is, of the taking and sack of the City, they laught him to scorn; so as that very word of the Lord denounced against them, was made a reproach unto him, and a derision daily, Jer. 20. 8.

2. In these vain thoughts their corrupt hearts were the more confirmed by the strong imaginations they harboured concerning the Privilege they had by the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem; willingly mistaking all the promises which God had made of his presence in his House and protection of his people resorting thither: extending that unto all, which was intended only to those that drew nigh unto him in truth. Hence, they looked upon the Temple as a perpetuall Asylum, or Sanctuary to them, against all the world, what ever wickedness they should commit. This appears by their saying, (Jer. 7. 4.) The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these. Let the Prophet threaten them with the

Chal-

Chaldean Yoke so often as he pleased, they would as often confidently put off all with this one Plea, *The Temple of the Lord*, and ring this in his eares over and over againe, as an invincible fortress against all enemies and threatenings: forgetting what God, many hundred yeeres before, had done unto *Shiloh*; that is, to the place in which his own *Ark* had been set up by *Joshuah*, at the first settling of *Israel* in *Canaan*, *Josh. 18. 1.* and there continued (in the Tribe of *Ephraim*; within which, *Joshuahs* own lot fell) above 300 yeeres, even untill the death of *Eli*, at what time the *Israelites*, having been smitten in battle at *Eben-Ezer*, by the uncircumcised *Philistines*, out of the like vain thoughts, fetcht the *Ark* from *Shiloh* into the Camp, that when it came among them it might (in the next encounter) save them out of the hand of their enemies; *1. Sam. 4. 3, 4.* But the event declared that confidence to be vain; for *Israel* was overthrown the second time, the *Ark* it self taken, the Priests that attended it were both slaine, *ver. 10. 11.* and the *Ark* was never brought back to its former place in *Shiloh* unto this day. Yet these fond men in *Jeremiahs* dayes; would by no meanes be beaten out of that conceit, that *The Temple* would be their *Palladium* against all assailants; trusting in lying words which had been taught them by their false Prophets, misinterpreting the word of truth concerning their Priviledge by having the Temple of God among them; which words could not profit them, *Jer. 7. 8.* but became their ruine.

3. They had yet another Imagination as strong and vain as the former, and that was an inveterate conceit of an impossibility to be supplanted, and brought into bondage by any Power on earth, by reason of their descent from *Abraham*, to whom God had promised to be a God not onely to himself, but his seed for ever; misapplying that unto themselves, because children of his flesh, which God intended onely to the children of his Faith. This thought arose in them, when threatened from God with any judgement. Witnesse, that speech of the *Baptist* when he had told them of the *Romanes* *Axe*, then laid to the root of the whole Jewish State. Think not to say within your selves, we have *Abraham* to our Father,

3. Their descent from *Abraham*.

2. *Obferve.* *Matt. 3. 9.* Which thew plainly they were apt unto such thoughts, and that this had been long lodged in them. *Yerem. 5. 1.* *So Job. 8. 33.* *his error* hath *Guile* upon the place. This was an old error that had been so long bred in the bone, as we say, that it would never out of the flesh, untill they were miserably subdued, their Temple burnt, their City demolished, and their seed made vagabonds over all the earth, by that fmall overthrow given them by *Vespasian* and *Titus*, about the seventieth year of Christ's birth.

4. *Heakening* to *false Prophets.*

14. To help to root all these *vain thoughts* the deeper in them, they had *swarmes of false Prophets*, which usually abounded most when the State was most corrupt, and ripe for some great Judgement: for then the devill is most busy to vent his lying prophecies, doctrines, and dreames, when justice is asleep. * *Judgement turned into worme wood*, and the people for their contempt and sleighting of the truth, given up of God to heap to themselves after their own lusts, multitudes of Teachers, turning away their ears from the truth, and giving heed to fables. This was the condition of *Jerusalem* at that time. *Jer. 5. 31.* *The Prophets prophesie falsely, and the people love to have it so.* They had multitudes of false Prophets that led them into that error, and confirmed them in it, that they should not be conquered by the *Chaldeans*, so that let *Jeremiah* say what he could, they would, even to the very last, contradict him, untill *Zedekiah* and all the rest, after all their persecuting of *Jeremiah* for telling them the truth, by wofull experience found the contrary, as is evident by that just and sharp exprobration of *Jeremiah*, *where are now your Prophets which prophesie unto you, saying, the King of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this Land's, Jer. 37. 19.* Yet this, their Prophets confidently avowed, and that in the name of the Lord, pretending as strong a Commission from God, for so doing, as *Jeremias* would, and thereby prevailing to far with the generall Body of that people, that onely themselves were reputed true Prophets of God, and *Jeremiah* rejected as an Impostor, against whom the people (destinated to destruction) took up this desperate resolution, *Come, let us devise*

devises against Jeremiah: for the Law shall not perish from the Priests, nor Council from the wise, nor the word from the Prophets; (meaning thereby such Priests, Counsellors, and Prophets as were then in most request with them.) Come, and let us advise him with the counsel (or, for the tongue; that is, for what he hath uttered against us with his tongue,) and let us not give heed unto any of his words, Jer. 18. 18.

5. When the wiser sort (which the State Politicians of those times took themselves to be) among them, perceived all the Prophets so constantly and unanimously to insist upon Threatnings of an iron Captivity, their Thoughts ran strongly (notwithstanding Gods command to the contrary) upon entering a league and confederacy with the neighbour Nation of Egypt, then a mighty and puissant people; that so, if afterwards Judah should be invaded by the Chaldeans, it might be assisted by the strength of Egypt. This was in contriving many scores of yeeres before the Captivity: for the Lord discerned the project, and denounced sundry woes against it, in the days of Isaiah. The leaders of the people, even then, were walking (in their thoughts and designs) to go down into Egypt, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Isai. 30. 2. and chap. 31. 1. And albeit they were told sufficiently from the very first, that the strength of Pharaoh should be their shame, and their trust in the shadow of Egypt, their confusion; yet they would not be beaten out of this by all the warnings given them, but held fast this device also, even to the very last, when being beseged by the Chaldeans, they sent to Pharaoh, who furnished them with such an Army as caused the Chaldeans, upon the news of their march, to rise, and withdraw themselves from Jerusalem for a season, Jer. 37. 5. And this so strongly confirmed the sin in their former Thoughts of the strength of Egypt, that till they found themselves destroyed by it, they could not be convinced of the vanity of it.

These were some of those Thoughts of vanity, which for many yeeres possessed Jerusalem and Judah when God by his Prophets, threatened their Captivity; and that caused them to turn

2. *Observ.* the deaf care, yea to give the ly to all those threatnings, untill it was too late to prevent that Calamity by any repentance.

Six other sorts of *Thoughts* which prolonged their misery when it was upon them.

1. Multitudes of costly sacrifices.

1. They *thought* that, multitudes of externall sacrifices would appease and pacifie Gods anger, and turn away his wrath from them. All Judah was now so far awakened, as to repair to the Temple to worship the Lord, *Jer.* 7. 2. It was the common inquiry of those, and some forgoing times; *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, With calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rammes, or With ten thousands of rivers of oile? Mic.* 6. 6, 7. If that would do it, they would ply him, till they had made him weary. But all this was but a vain *Thought*. God tells them plainly, *Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me, Jer.* 6. 20. Therefore do even what you will with them; put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh, *Jer.* 7. 21. Jumble altogether; that which should be burnt on the Altar, with that which should be eaten by the Priests; and eat it up all (if ye will) your own selves; I will none of it, *For I spake not to your Fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices; that is, such, and so offered, with neglect of sincere obedience in morall duties, ver.* 22. Therefore, bring no more vain oblations, *Isai.* 1. 13.

2. Frequent fasts.

2. They went yet further, and beside putting themselves to cost, they put themselves also to some pain, when they saw the former alone would not do. They afflicted their souls by fasting, wherein they made great semblance of much sorrow and humiliation; *banging their heads like a bull-rush in the mire,* when

when overflowed by a torrent, and carried down the stream, *Isai. 58. 5.* Yes, they would frequently and daily come about God in his house with great shews of much love to him and delight in his wayes; as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the Ordinance of their God. They cry unto him, my Father thou art the guide of my youth. Will he reserve his anger for ever? Will he keep it unto the end? *Jer. 3. 4.* but they do but flatter him with their lips. For so God tells them, in the same breath; Behold thou hast spoken (that is, thou hast thus given me a few good words;) but in the mean while, thou hast done as evil things as thou couldst, *ver. 5.* This is the constant garb of all hypocrits, they are never more vicious than when they are most in externall duties of humiliation for sin, in times of greatest dangers and troubles. Therefore even this also was but the fruit of vain thoughts in Judah, which rather fastened and increased, than any way removed or lessened their misery, because Judah turned not to the Lord with her whole heart, but fainedly, saith the Lord, *Jer. 3. 10.*

3. They were not without thoughts of some compliances with their neighbours, in worship, in their guise, yea, in their very meretricious paintings (like *Jezebel*, when sought by *Jehu*;) vainly hoping that these might work more compassion, in the *Egyptians* to move them to help them; and, in the *Chaldeans* themselves, to deal more mercifully, in case they should subdue them. It was usuall with the *Jews* to call in the *Egyptians*, if distressed by the *Assyrian*; and, at another time, to crave ayd of the *Assyrians*, if invaded from *Egypt*, or* other parts. And now, that they had resolved upon *Egypt*, to assist them against the *Chaldean*, they held it a great peece of policy, yea, a point of necessity at that time; (whatever *Jeremiah* pressed to the contrary) not to part with any of those Idols that they had taken from *Egypt*, *Chaldea*, or other Nations; but, at least during that present exigent, to retain them all; thinking that when strangers should behold the *Jews* worshipping the same Gods with them, they could not be so hard-hearted (as otherwise in likely-hood they would be) towards them. That this was in their Thoughts, and pleaded

3. Compliance with their neighbours.

2. King. 16. 7.

2. *Obſerv.*

as a reason why thy could not so suddenly lay aside all their Idols, least it might not only make some rents among themselves (many, yea, most of them being for liberty to enjoy their Idols and to worship God too, and it might be dangerous then to bind all men to worship one God, in one way only;) but alienate the hearts of their friends, and exasperate the spirits of their enemies: and that therefore it were far better, to indulge a little; yea, in outward appearance, to comply for a while, more than ever, that they might be more gracious in the eyes of their friends who would more readily assist them; and less hatefull to their enemies when conquered by them: is manifest by that sharp reproof, and sad prediction, *Jer. 4. 30. Though thou clotheſt thy ſelf with crimſon, though thou deckeſt thee with ornaments of gold, though thou reſt thy face with painting, in vain ſhalt thou make thy ſelf fair; thy lovers will deſpiſe thee, they will ſeek thy life.* Thy policy shall be thy ruine, and that by those very men whom by such means and compliances thou seekest to ingratiate to thee. All which is not to be understood, so much of externall adorning of the body, as of conformity in Idolatry with the neighbour nations, thereby to seek and draw their love unto them, out of a pretended necessity; as harlots by their garish attire and gestures use to entice and inveigle their lustfull lovers. So Saint Hierome, Theodoret, Rabanus, and Lyra among the Ancients; Calvin, a Lapide, and other Neotericks, expound that place.

4. False prophecies of shortning their troubles.

2. *Kim. 24.*

4. After the Captivity was in part begun; *Jehoiachin*, or *Jecaniah*, together with all the vessels of gold that were in the Temple, the treasure of the Kings house, and all the men of valour and esteem in *Jerusalem*, being all carried into *Babylon* in the eighth year of *Nebuchadnezars* reign; and *Zedekiah* exalted to the Throne as a Tributary Prince, by that heathen Conquerour: The Jews, beguiled by false Prophets then abounding, began to conceive thoughts that God had now set up *Zedekiah* to assert and vindicate *Judas* Liberty, and to break the yoke of *Babylon*. This put *Zedekiah* into a new Rebellion against *Nebuchadnezar* (whole vassall now he was,) for *Hanniah*

Jeremiah had confidently avouched in the Name of the Lord, to Jeremiah the Prophecy (who had prophesied that their captivity should last seventy years) in the presence of the Priests and of all the people, that less than two years would make an end of that business, the Yoke of the King of Babylon should be broken, the vessels of the Lords House should be all restored, and Jeremiah with all the Captives, returned to Jerusalem, Jer. 28: 1, 2, 3. These vain dreams so strongly took with the people also, that they instantly sided with Zedekiah, whereby all were engaged in a tedious and fatal war, that brought them under more and greater misery than before; and, instead of recovering those that had been before carryed to Babylon, cast themselves and many thousands more into the same condition, Jer. 39. In all which time Jeremiah faithfully discovered the vanity of those thoughts, told them the issue, convinced them of their folly, for which he was rewarded, sometimes with contempt, sometimes with buffetting, sometimes with a prison, a dungeon, and the threatening of death it self; so desperately were they bent to retain their own Thoughts and conceits, that they would rather hazard, and loose all (as in the issue they did) than part with them, before they had tried all those wayes into which seducers, by their fair glossings and cunning insinuations, had drawn them.

5. When they were altogether broken in peeces by the Chaldean Army, their City and Temple burnt with fire, and most of the Jews gone into Captivity, together with Zedekiah; other vain thoughts, as pernicious as any of the former haunted their still. For a while, they repaired to Gedaliah, to Gedaliah, who was, by Nebuzaradan the Chaldean Generall, constituted Governour of Judah, under Nebuchadnezzar. Gedaliah perswaded them (as Jeremiah had done) not to fear, but to serve the Chaldeans; to which, for the present, they seemed not unwilling, Jer. 40. But no sooner was Gedaliah butchered by Ishmael (one of the Lord Royall,) but Johanan and the rest of the people took occasion thence (out of pretence that this murder would be so severely revenged by the King of Babylon, that hardly any Jews in the Land, were likely to escape with their

5. Desire to
take Sanctuary
in Egypt.

The Vanity and Mischief

(lives) to set on foot their old Project of *going down into Egypt*; to repose themselves there untill better times, where they needed not (as they fancied) to endure such slavery and poverty as they saw inevitable to them at home, but should have liberty, and plenty of all things; not considering their duty in submitting to that Yoke, which God had imposed on them in their own Land, nor the danger of being polluted with more Idolatry in *Egypt*. And because *Jeremiah* was amongst them, they importuned him to *pray to the Lord*, to shew them what (in that great strait,) he would have them to do; and they promise on their parts to obey it, be it what it would: supposing that now God would surely give way to their going into *Egypt*, because all things were then become so desperate in *Judah*. Contrary to their expectation, God gives them a strict charge not to go thither, but to stay at home; promising protection and blessing at home; and threatening utter destruction by sword, famine, and pestilence, to all that, after this warning given, should dare to sojourn in *Egypt*, *Jer. 42*. All this notwithstanding, their vain thoughts of shelter in *Egypt* for a season, and hope of return thence so soon as it might be safe to dwell in *Judah*, prevailed so far with them, as to give the Prophet the ly, *thou speakest falsely; the Lord our God hath not sent thee, to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there, Jer. 43. 2.* and then, *Jehonah* and his complices, take all the men, women, and children, that were with *Geidaliah*, and among them *Jeremiah* himself, and *Baruch* his Scribe (that so, these might fare as ill as the rest, if evil befell them) and to carry them down into *Egypt*, in despite of *Jeremiah* and all his prophesying. Being there, at *Taphanes* (one of the Royall Cities and States of *Pharaoh*) *Jeremiah* spares neither them, nor *Egypt*, but denounceth from the Lord, totall perdition to both; and that by the sword of *Babylon*, *cap. 43. and 44*. Nevertheless, they fell greedily to the Idolatry of *Egypt*; for which being reproved by the faithfull Prophet, they (and *Pharaoh* together, say some Historians) stoned him to death in *Taphanes*. But that murder went not long unrevengeed by God, who in the fourth yeare after the coming of the *Jews* into *Egypt*, brought the Chaldeans
(after

(after *Nebuchadnezzar* had conquered *Syria*, *Meab*, and *Ammon*) upon *Egypt*, where he over-run and ruined the Kingdom, slew the King, and many of the *Jews*; carrying the rest of them with him into *Babylon*, who might have dwelt safely in their own Land, had they not been so mad upon *Egypt*. Thus that foolish people, through their own vain thoughts, not onely lengthened, but much increased their misery, by not taking the course God had prescribed, but following the way of their own hearts and thoughts, in going down into *Egypt*; where the thing that they feared fell upon them, and the happiness they expected fled further from them.

6. As for those that were in *Babylon*, one would easily believe that they had enough of the fruit of their own vain thoughts; so as now, if ever, they would dislodge and cashier them. But alas! even there, many vain thoughts still remained in to many of them. For (to say nothing of their grosse thoughts, in *Babylon*, where, impatient of their bondage, they thought it better to comply with Idolaters (who flourished in all wealth and abundance, while these Captives lay under the depth of misery) than to abstain from Idolatry, and so provoke their hard-masters the more against them; as appears by that in *Ezek. 20. 32. We will be as the heathen, as the families of the Countries, to serve Wood and Stone.*

It is lamentable to consider the vanity of their Thoughts, not only in the confidence they placed in their formal monethly fastings, in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth moneth of every yeare, *Zach. 8. 19.* for seventy yeers together, *Zach. 7. 3.* all which were rejected of God as mock-fasts, that were never truly and indeed kept unto him at all, *ver. 5.* And it is yet more wonderfull to behold the extreme vanity that possessed them, even after the end of those seventy yeers, when *Cyrus* proclaimed liberty to the *Jews* to return to their own Land, and to rebuild the City, and Temple. For even then, albeit at their first coming home, they did somewhat toward the building of the Lords House, and in the second yeare after their return, they laid the foundation of it, *Ezra 3.* Yet, upon the first opposition of their enemies, they soon laid it aside, and began

2. *Observe.*
Joseph. Antiq.
Jud. lib. 10.

6. In *Babylon*,
1. Compliance
againc.

2. Frequent
fasting.

3. After their
return, their
neglect of
Gods House,
and building
of their own.

2. *Observer* to attend the building of their own houses wholly, & concealing and concluding, *The time is not come, the time that the Lords House should be built, Hag. 1. 2.* This the Lord took so unkindly, that when afterwards they would have gone forwards with it, they meet with so many, and tedious oppositions therein (besides many miseries, and sad miscarriages and disappointments in their own Civill affaires) that it was (by the computation of *Junius*, and other exact Chronologers) twice as long a time before they could finish the building of the City and Temple, as they were detained in *Babylon* in that long Captivity. And this I take to be evident to any wise and diligent Observer of the Books of *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, compared with other Historically parts of the sacred Scripture; which I shall now passe over, because I have heretofore touched upon it, in your hearing. So that their own vain Thoughts had drawn out their misery, into far greater length, than God himself at first intended. For even, in the twentieth year of the reign of *Artaxerxes Mermion*, (which was at the least 144. yeeres after their first coming home from *Babylon*) the remnant of the Captivity in the Province were in great affliction and reproach, *Neh. 1. 3.* which moved *Nehemiah* to shed many a salt tear, and to spend many dayes and nights in fasting and prayer, before the whole work could be finished, and the people eased and freed of that long and sharp affliction.

*Vide Scaliger.
Helvic. Jun.
alioſque.*

Thus I have, at length, shewed you, that the Thoughts of this People were, that did so much mislead them, in their

3. Reasons of the Point.

1. Sin beſets men.

2. I come now to the Grounds of the Point, which I shall reduce to these three.

1. It is the nature of sin, and finfull thoughts long harboured and much made of, to beſet men in their Intellectuals, as well as to corrupt their affections. Sin makes fools of the wisest men; even of *Solomon* himself, *1. King. 10.* It makes men unable to judge of the folly of a finfull way, and the more grosse the sin, the lesse knowledge is left in the sinner, to judge of the grosseſſe of it. *He feedeth of Ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, Is there not a ly in my right hand? Isai. 44. 20.* And as it makes him

him, senseless of the sinfulness, so it makes him as foolish in projecting his deliverance from the evil, which is drawn upon him. This was Ephraims case; *Hos. 7. 9. Strangers devoured his strength, yet he knew not; yea, Grey haire was here and there upon him, and yet he knew not.* What was it that he knew not? was he ignorant of what befell him? Nay, witness his fretting and chafing under it, that had brought him to grey haire before his time. But this was it which he knew not, viz: the true and right way to be delivered from it. He vainly supposed, he knew well enough (without asking counsel of a Priest or Prophet) how to rid himself of the evils that were upon him: and so, out of self confidence, he scorned to advise with God, even after he had found by experience, that he had taken a wrong course: for the Lord complains there, in *ver. 10. the Pride of Israel testifieth to his face, and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him for all this.* Let what would befall him; he would endure it all, rather than confesse his folly. Therefore is it added, *Ephraim also is a silly dove, without heart* (there is no fool to the self, conceited wise man,) *they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria, ver. 14.* They will turn every stone, try all means in Earth and Hell, before they will return to God, in their greatest extremity. No marvel then, if they find that true, *When they go I will spread my net upon them, I will bring them down as the fowles of the Heavens, ver. 12.* Sin makes men as sottish as silly birds in a Net. The more they flutter and beat themselves to get out, the more sure prey they are to the Fowler. This is it which makes great men, and wise men of the world to account it a disparagement, to do as a Minister adviseth, and to take any course rather than that; and if they happen to take his counsell, when they are beaten out of their own, they will not endure to hear that it was done at his motion or instance, be it never so necessary and proper for a Minister of Christ, to press in behalf of his Master, and be they otherwise never so negligent in the doing of it.

2. The just Judgement of God upon a person, or people that have long stood it out with God, and would take no

2. Reason, Gods Judgement upon ob-
durate sinners.

The Vanity and Mischiefe .

warnings. When God by his Messengers hath long called and cryed earlly and late unto a people, and they make no answer; God gives them up to a *spirit of slumber*, closing their eyes that they should not see, and their eares that they should not hear: And then, no marvail if they be drunken, but not with wine, and that they stagger but not with strong drink; *Isai. 29. 9.* So that, when God lets fly upon such persons and people, it is usually very long ere they be able to shake the arrow out again. And that a Judgement may ly on to purpose, when once inflicted, untill men be either humbled or destroyed, God hath many wayes to bind it down, and to keep it there, by working most holily upon the perverse thoughts of those that are under it; as namely, 1. By letting in an *evill spirit*, that is, a spirit of jealousy, misunderstanding and incurable division, between Prince and people, for the just scourge and destruction of both; as, between *Abimeleck* and the men of *Shechem*, he being guilty of blood, and they being some way aiding unto him in the shedding of it, *Judg. 9. 23, 24.* Thus *Rehoboam*, pertinaciously adhering to the evill counsell of a company of yong vain men that had been brought up with him, (*1. King. 12.*) made the rent so wide between him and his Petitioning Subjects, that ten Tribes fell off from him at once; which laid the foundation of such a lasting warre, as never ended, while *Israel* and *Judah* (now divided) continued to be Kingdoms. And this thing was from the Lord, (*1. King. 12. 23.*) for the great ingratitude of *Solomon*, whose heart turned away from the Lord God of *Israel*, which had appeared unto him twice, *1. King. 11. 9.* 2. God can do it by filling all the inhabitants of the Land, even the Kings that sit upon *Dauids Throne*, and the Priests and the Prophets and all the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* with drunkenness, and dashing them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, *Jer. 13. 13, 14.* The Lord doth not onely dash the King and people together, but even the people also among themselves that should hold together. It was so with *Egypt*, *Isai. 19. 2.* I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians, and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour, City against City, and Kingdom

dom against Kingdom. 3. He can lengthen out a Judgement even upon those that may possibly agree well enough together, by uniting the wits and counsellors of those that are trusted to manage the Publike affaires, in times wherein there is need of most wisdom and judgement. Thus, the *Princes of Loan* turned fools, the counsellors of the wise Counsellors of Pharaoh became brutish:— they seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the Tribes. And the reason was, The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof, and they have caused Egypt to erre in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit, *Isai.* 19. 11, 13, 14. When they came together to consult the safety and peace of Egypt, they were led by such a spirit of perverseness, as tended rather to the further troubling and ruine of the Kingdom, being as ill able to give counsell, as a pack of staggering, reeling drunkards.

3. God in wisdom, doth sometimes for a good space conceal even from his own, the true Cause of a Judgement inflicted, that the Cause may be more laid to heart, when it is discovered. So that, if men were never so willing to take the right course to remove it, yet it continues, because they know not wherefore the Land mourns, and what would pacifie the Lord. *Joshuah* himself and all the Elders of *Israel* together shall not, by all their prayers and fastings, recover Gods favour to *Israel*, untill God discover the sin, and find out the *Achan* that troubled *Israel*; whereby Justice might be done on him that troubled them, *Josh.* 7. In the dayes of *David* there was a famine of three yeers continuance year by year, (which lasted almost half so long as the great famine of Egypt) and all that *David* could do by all that time, could not remove it, untill the Lord discovered the true cause to be for *Saul* and his bloody house, because he slew the *Gibconites*; which being made known, and Justice done upon seven of his sons, the Lord was entreated for the Land, *2. Sam.* 21. Who therefore, is the wise man, that may understand this, and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it, for when the Land perisheth, and is burnt up like a wilderness, that none passeth

3. Reason,
God doth
sometimes
conceal from
his own, the
true cause of
the Judgement.

2. *Observe* *possess through* Gen. 9. 12. Till this be understood, the judgement is immovable, *wherein ye shall be judged* Rom. 2. 13. You have now the *Reason* of the Point. I shall (for more expedition) deferre the *Way*, untill I have briefly spoken some what of the third Point, which is this, *How long* God keeps exact reckoning of the time, and accounts it very long, and takes all delays ill, wherein men wander in judgements, are projecting waies of their own for their deliverance, and so wish stand those of his appointments.

3. *Observe*.

THIS the Lord here mainly aimed at in this *Exprobation*; namely, to let them know that he took speciall notice of, and laid to heart every houre and minute; wherein those vain thoughts remained in them, and accounted the time very long. *How long? how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* I speaking by way of a patheticall *Interjection*, uttering a deep passion of the mind (after the manner of men) by an imperfect speech; and not of a bare interrogative onely, whereby a question may be put; and the heart little or nothing affected with it.

Thus God takes notice of the same thing, not onely in *Pharaoh*, *How long wilt thou refuse so humble thy self before me?* *Exod. 10. 3.* but, even in *Israel* also. *How long refuse ye to keep my Commandments and my Laws?* *Exod. 16. 28.* *How long will this people provoke me, and how long will it be ere they believe me?* *Numb. 14. 11.* *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanitie and seek after leasing?* and this, marked with a *Selah*; *Psal. 4. 2.* So *Wisdom* cries out to the wicked; (who are the greatest fools; be they never so wise in matters of the world,) *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity; and the scorniers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?* *Prov. 1. 22.* In like manner God speaks to the spirituall *Sluggard*, that trifles away precious opportunities, untill he put himself into the foreordained condition of the foolish *Virgins*, *Matt. 25.* thinking, now, and now,

now, he will shake off his sloth, and carelesseſſe of his ſoul, and do ſomewhat toward the working out of his ſalvation, yet ſtill deſers, and lyes ſtill in the bed of ſecurity; *How long wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggard! when wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep? Prov. 6. 9.*

And as God takes notice of our ſtupidity; ſo, he takes it very ill, and layes it deeply to heart, where ever he finds ſuch procaſtinating, and trifling with him. *I (ſaith the Lord) have ſeen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdneſſe of thy whoredoms; and thine abominations on the hills in the fields: woe unto thee, O Jeruſalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when ſhall it once be ſer. 13. 27.* He not onely ſees what ſhe doth, & how long the lyes wallowing in her filthineſſe; but denounceth woe unto her for the ſame. This is it which makes his anger (even after ſharp and devouring afflictions) not to be turned away, but his hand ſo be ſtretched out ſtill; when, the people turn not to him that ſmiteth them nor ſeek the Lord of hoſts, as they ought, *Iſai. 9. 12, 13.* If God give Jezebel ſpace to repent of her fornications, and ſhe repent not: the next news ſhe heares from him ſhall be this, *Behold, I will caſt her upon a Bed, and ſhe ſhall commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds, Rev. 2. 22.* I ſhall adde but one inſtance more, and that is of *Iſrael*. Read over the fourth chapter of *Amos*, which is enough (if any thing be enough) to awaken England. God ſeeing *Iſrael* in a fatall Lethargy, uſed all means to awaken her; and, finding her too tenacious of her wickedneſſe, applied all means to embitter ſt to her; but, keeps an exact account of all, of the famines, drowths, plagiings, mildews, palmer-wormes, peſtilences after the manner of Egypt, ſword, fire and other judgements, and of her obſtinacy in them; that, yet, and yet ſhe ſtood it out, and would not return unto him: And with all, bids her now prepare her ſelf, as the Sheriff uſes to give warning to malefactors that are ſuddenly to be executed: for ſhe ſhall know, to her woe, that the Lord keeps reckoning of every prank, and delay, of every day and houre of her ſtanding off: for he had ſworn by his holineſſe that the dayes ſhould come upon her, wherein he would take her away with books,

3. Observe

and her posterity with fish-hooks, *Amos 8.* He would leave neither her, nor any of hers in the Land; but the Assyrian should sweep them all away, without distinction; or mercy. And to show how resolute he was in this, he after binds himself to the same severity by another Oath, *Amos 8. 7.* wherein he swears by the Excellency of Jacob; saying, Surely I will never forget any of their works.

The Grounds of this Point are likewise three.

1. Reason, from
Gods Compassion.

1. The Bowels that are in God do so much yern upon his people in distresse, that as in all their afflictions, he himself is afflicted; *Isai. 63. 9.* So is he infinitely desirous to hasten their deliverance, and therefore, extremely sensible and even impatient of the least delay or obstruction (be it but a vain shew) retarding their deliverance. Although he can't grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies: for he doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men. *Lam. 3. 33, 34.* No marvel then if he cry out, O Hierusalem, Hierusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. *Mat. 23. 37, 38.* Ye so passionately rebuff it, God to deliver his people, that their stupidity and obstinacy in withstanding their own deliverance, drew teares from our Saviour; for, when he came near (to Hierusalem) he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, O if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. *Luk. 19. 41, 42.* The notice he takes of their long standing out, and his laying it so much to heart, was upon this ground; his earnest desire to save them. How ill he takes this, he that rubs may read, in the next words; For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; and the reason thereof was this, because they kept not the day of their visitation, *ver. 43, 44.*

2. By

By mens delays, and procrasting, whereby of whom
for deliverance, with neglect of chase of Gods appointments,
the Majesty, Power, and Justice of God, as well as his Mercy,
are all slighted at once. They that having favour shamed them,
will not turn righteously, are charged with this, they will not
behold the Majesty of the Lord, I said so, go Elsewhere, with
not regarding his Power. Hear now this, O foolish people and
without understanding, which have eyes and see not, which
have ears and hear not, Fear ye not me, saith the Lord, will ye
not tremble at my presence, which have placed the Land for the
hand of the Sea by a perpetual decree &c. but this people hath a
revolted and rebellious heart, they are exalted and gone, for
21. 22. 23. In another place, they are taxed with contempt of
his Justice; Shall a Trumpet be blown in the City, and the people
not be afraid? Amos 3. 6. Now then, when men thus stand it
out, and thereby sin against so many Attributes of God at
once, it is any wonder that he takes these delays to ill of our
hands?

3. Of 2.
1. Reason, such
fin against all
the Attributes
of God at
once.

3. Common Equity cries shame, and calls for revenge upon
this sin. We would not be so used our selves, by those under
our own command and Government. If a Critick send a gra-
cious Message to one of his Vassals, justly condemned to die and
let him know, that if he will but acknowledge his offence, he
heartily sorry for it, and resolve to do so no more, he will send
him a Pardon, would he bear such an answer as this? I will
accept of your Pardon, thank you for your favour, and hope you
will spare me; but I hope in another way to work my own deliv-
rance; and that is, by continuing to be a Traitor still, at least in
heart, if not with my hands? What greater shame could be re-
turned? If a father discipline his child, or a Master his servant,
would it not argue him to send either child or servant, instead
of reforming that fault, to study, and practise other wayes of
stubbornness and disobedience, the better to uphold himself in
his first offence? Doth not that himself thus plead it out, with
Moses, setting out the iniquity of his sister Miriam, or A-
dams before he had been sufficiently humbled by hearing the just
shame of his sin, and the marks of Gods displeasure, saying

3. Reason, we
would not be
so used our
selves.

3. *Observe.*

for the whole time appointed? If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven dayes? Num. 12. 14. Much more therefore ought she to undergo that shame which God himself had cast upon her, and wait upon him in his own way for her restitution. Nay, we are apt to quarrell and clamour without cause, even against God himself, when we do but conceit that he neglects or delays to take notice and accept of any thing we tender to him in our way, (how justly soever he may abhor it;) wherefore have we fasted, say they (in *Isa. 58. 3.*) and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge? No marvail then, if God take it ill with a witnesse at the hands of men, when they give him just cause to complaine that, when he hath long and earnestly prescribed them a way to their own deliverance, by washing their hearts from wickednesse, and by parting with all those vaine thoughts which made their hearts so wicked, they still suffer those very thoughts so long to lodge and remain within them, as expecting deliverance by that way which was the cause of their evils.

*The Uses
of the two last
Points.*

I am sensible of your affaires, and of the length of this Discourse, I shall therefore now absolve the *Uses* of both these Points together, with all possible brevity.

If it be usually so long ere men, under Judgements, (especially Nationall) can hit upon the right course for their own deliverance; and that God keeps such an exact reckoning of the time, accounting it very long, and taking all delays so ill at their hands, wherein they prosecute wayes of their own, with neglect of those of his appointment, for their deliverance: Then,

1. *Use.*
Information.

1. Be hence informed of the great deceitfulness of sin, and of the mischief it brings to all that entertain it; And that the Scripture saith not in vain, *Exhorts one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, Heb. 3. 13.* Sin hath a beautifull face, but a Crocodiles heart, and a Scorpions taile. It first woos hard to get any acceptance at present; afterwards, it fascinates the heart to give it lodging & longer entertainment; and then, when Judgments pursue them, men find their sins to deal with them as *wine* (which

(which is a mocker, Pro. 20. 1.) uſeth to handle thoſe that immoderately uſe it; it cauſeth them to miſtake all things; & to be moſt to ſeek of their way when it is moſt dangerous to deviate from it: ſo as it may be ſaid of all ſinners, in this caſe, by reaſon of ſin (when they have moſt need to have all their wits about them, when the wrath of God begins to burn like fire, whereby even the whole Land becomes as a wilderneſſe that none paſſeth through, and, there is none amongſt us that knows how long;) that was once laid to the charge of the drunkards of Ephraim, by reaſon of wine; they have erred through wine, and through ſtrong drink are out of the way, and the Prophets have erred through ſtrong drink, they are ſwallowed up of wine: they are out of the way through ſtrong drink, they erre in viſion, they ſtumble in judgement, Iſai. 28. 7. So is it with every one that is greedy of ſin, it takes away the very underſtanding, reaſon and life of all that lodge it and feed it. Yea, it deals with them, as ſometimes Eliſha with thoſe that were ſent from the King of Syria, to apprehend him; the Prophet firſt procures them to be ſmiſſen with blindneſſe; then, by an Irony, (finding them at a loſſe) cries out unto them, *This is not the way, neither is this the City: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye ſeek; but he led them to Samaria*, even into the miſt of their enemies, 2. King. 6. No ſtratagem, or ambuſh in the world, can be more cunningly contrived, nor more ſurely take, than that which is laid for the precious ſoul of every ſinner, by his vain thoughts that lodge within him.

2. This (like Ezekiel's route that was written within and without) ſpeaks nothing but Lamentation and woe, (Ezek. 2. 10) to all thoſe ſortly ſinners, who being reprov'd for any ſin, and exhorted forthwith to forſake it, as the only ſure means to get rid of the evils it hath brought upon them, do yet hold faſt, deſiſt and reſuſe to return; and that upon an opinion that they can repent when they pleaſe, and make their peace with God when they liſt: That it is no great harme to hold on their ſins a little longer; and ſo upon this preſumption, they weary themſelves to commit iniquity, as the Prophet ſpeaketh, Jer. 9. 5. They have wiſdom, policy, ſubtilty, ſtrength,

2. U/c.
Woe and terror
to obdurate
ſinners.
ſo daily reſolve
to continue in
their iniquity.

The Vanity and Mischief

friends, and allies, a purle &c. to make their peace with men, to shake but not to stir, as that sticks in their flesh, to free themselves of any troubles that have arrested them: and so, they miserably perish by means of those *vain thoughts* that thus mislead and abuse them, by setting up an *imagination* to beguile them, instead of a true light to guide their feet into the way of peace. Thus are we all deluded and cheated by every baselust, by every *vain thought* of pride, covetousness, ambition, wantonness, idleness, Machiavelianisme, revenge, self-seeking, private ends in managing publick affaires, undermining, blasting, or depraving others to make way for our own projects, &c. that lodge in us. What ever our lust be, if once we yield unto it (as that same lot to the flattering harlot, Prov. 7.) woe unto us, woe unto us, we are undone, we have no longer any command of our spirit, but we willingly go a step at straight way, as an axe godd to be slaughtered, or as a fowl to the correction of the flock, till a dark strike through our vision, as a bird hatched to the snare, and knoweth not what it is for his life. This is that Delilah that never admits Sampson to sleep in her lap, but with purpose to betray him to the Philistines that have vow'd his destruction: She hath cast down many wounded, yea, in my strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of death. They who cannot withstand temptation soliciting to sin, will hardly find their way out of sin, or so much as an heart truly desirous of freedom from it, when most plagued for it, but choose rather to go to Hell with their lust, than to Heaven without it.

Prov. 7. 26, 27.

3. *Instruction*
Touching the
prolonging of
our miseries.

3. By this, we may be able to prognosticate and foretell somewhat of the length of the great evils that now lie so heavy upon this languishing Kingdom, in this day, or rather long night of our sorrows, wherein we wait for light, but behold obscurity, for brightness, but we walk in darkness; we grope for the wall like the blind; and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble upon stones in the night, we are in desolate places as dead men: We roare all like beares, and mourn for like doves, we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us: Hitherto Gods hand hath been heavy, and is yet
stret-

stretched out still. Thank none but our *vain thoughts* within us, for all this. Could we have dislodged them, our work, our toyle, our trouble and dangers had been long since at an end. When a mans wayes please God, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him, Prov. 16. 7. Yea, he shall be in league with the stones; and at peace with the very beasts of the field, Job 31. 23. But, O the multitude, variety, continuity, and fatall constancy of *vain Thoughts* that still remain in the most, yea, in the best!

When this unhappy and unnaturall war first began, how were we filled with strong expectations that one moneth or six weeks would have made an end of the business! When those hopes were frustrate, what mountaines of fresh confidence did our *thoughts* cast up in us, by the next Summers expedition, especially by that famous relieving of *Gloucester*, and first battell at *Neubury*, wherein divers chief Commanders of the Enemy were slaine, and scarce any of them left unwounded. Then was our *moneth* filled with *triumphs*; and our tongue with *singing*. Howbeit, that Summer is ended; and another gone over us; and we are entering upon a third, yet we are not saved. Then, our thoughts (as vain as any of the former) began to run strongly upon the faults of men trusted with your sword, the negligence of some; the weaknesse and cowardise of others; but especially the Treachery of others; and what next? do but purge the Armies; settle their pay; remove the unworthy, mould a Godly Army, change the Commanders; and then, *Quid non speramus bianco?* Far be it from me to slight any of these means, or your honorable care and indefatigable diligence therein, so often as just cause requireth. But give me leave to deal faithfully and plainly; none of all these will do any thing, but rather help to increase and lengthen out our misery, so long as our *vain thoughts* remain with us; if we trust in an arme of flesh, and vainly think that shall save us; the Lord will reject all our confidences, we shall not prosper therein. Jer. 37. If, in the wisdom, fidelity, and power of a Parliament; even that also shall deceive us; not because it is unusefull; for it is Gods Ordinance (without which, we had long ere this been in the *whales belly* of boundlesse Prerogative; and gone down.

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down to the bottomes of the mountaines of Arbitrary Tyranny, with her barres about us for ever;) but if once we make an Idoll of Parliaments, or of any creature, and begin to think thoughts of them which we ought not to conceive of any but of God himself, the Lord will not endure it. How quickly can he say to all, whether Parliament men themselves, or others that trust in them beyond what is meet, as sometimes the King of Assyria to Hezekiah and his people, for their trust in the strength of Egypt, 2. King. 18. 19, 20. *What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? thou sayest (but they are but vain words) I have counsell and strength for the war! Alas! how soon can the Lord (yea, how often doth he) blast all the wisdom and counsell of the best Counsellors! Achitophels counsell was once accounted of as if one had enquired at the Oracle of God, 2. Sam. 16. 23. And when he gave his advice to Absalom, it had taken with a witnesse, and done the deed projected, had not Hushai prevented it by giving contrary counsell; and that, because the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsell (not that it was good simply, but onely in reference to the end for which it was given,) of Achitophell, to the intent that the Lord might bring evill upon Absalom. Which I note by the way, to shew that good counsels are sometimes disappointed by the good God, to open a way to the destruction of an evill people, as I have observed before, in the case of Egypt, Isai. 19. 13; 14.*

Would we then know, when we are likely to see an end of our troubles? The Resolution will be easy and sure. Then, and never till then, shall salvation and deliverance come leaping upon the mountains, and skipping over the hills; Cant. 2. 8. yea, then shall the Lord himself ride upon a Cherub and fly, even upon the wings of the wind, Psal. 18. 10. to give us rest, and to keep us in perfect peace, making our Officers peace, and our Executors righteousnesse; so that violence shall no more be heard in our Land, nor wasting or destruction within our borders, but we shall call our walls salvation, and our gates praise; namely, when we are willing to part with all our vain thoughts formerly mentioned, or any other that lodge within us, and shall cast them away as a monstrous cloth, saying unto them with hatred and detestation,

of the Thoughts.

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tion, *Get ye hence, Isai. 30. 22.* But untill then, it is not all the wisdom, policy, and Armies in the world, that shall be able to help us; it will be with us as with *Israel, 2. Chro. 15. 5, 6.* when there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the Countries, *And nation was destroyed of nation, and City of City: for God did vex them with all adversity.*

3. U/c.

4. Be hence Admonished and Exhorted to beware of all thoughts, designs, and projects of your own, as thinking thereby to put an end to the miseries and desolations of the Kingdom. Make haste, part with all such vanities, even while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened in them, ere you be aware. Cast *Jezebel* out at the window presently, paint she never so exquisitely, although formerly thou have been her Eunuch: now (*John*, shall I say? nay,) now *Jehovah* calls, and demands her of thee. Let this very houre begin the eternall parting between us and all our lusts, and thoughts of vanity. Let not God come so much as once more, and find them lodging in us, and renew his complaint against us, and say, *How long!* Lest he make us to howl out our complaints to him for the length of our calamities; to follow him in vain, with as many *How long's*, as he hath done us, and to cry out with the Psalmist, *Psal. 12. 1, 2.* *How long wilt thou forget me (O Lord) for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsell in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? And when we have all done, to sit down in desperate grief, as sometimes the Church of old, having none among us that know-*

4. U/c.
Admonition to
part with vain
thoughts speedily.

est how long. Psal. 74. 9. It would be a sad Symptome of a lasting Judgement and universall devastation; if after all the Lords waiting that he might be gracious unto us, * we should yet longer despise the riches of his goodnesse, forbearance, and long-suffering, as men not knowing that the goodnesse of God leadeth unto Repentance. This were to treasure up more wrath against the day of wrath, *Rom. 2.* But especially if You, Honourable and Beloved, (who are the stay of the Tribes *) after so many dayes

* Isai. 30. 18.

* Isai. 19.

H

of

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of Humiliation, and so often solemn falling down before the Lord, (as sometimes *Josueph and the Elders*) *Wish dust upon your heads*, in the behalf of *Israel*, should entertain and harbour any *Thought* of your own self sufficiency, wisdom, power, any thing, to carry on the great work of so many Kingdoms (all gasping for life) further than God shall please to use you as his humble and faithfull Instruments, that are well content to be made any thing, every thing, nothing, so he may have glory, what ever becomes of you, and of all your private interests. Take heed, take heed, I humbly pray you, to your own Spirits; you have your corruptions, your *vain Thoughts* as well as others, and are obnoxious to more and greater tentations, as the higher Trees and Towers are more subject to winds and storms, than lower shrubs and buildings. *Vain thoughts* in private persons, do for the most part sink few but themselves, unless, when the disease becomes Epidemicall: But *vain thoughts* entertained by you, in managing the great businesses that are under your hands, would ruin two, if not three Kingdoms at once. Let the miscarriage of *Jerusalem* make you more circumspect and cautious. Their *vain Thoughts* are recorded for your Admonition. Look upon them as so many Rocks or Shelves that split them, and will as certainly ruin all others that (not taking warning by *Jerusalem*) shall adventure too neer them.

Your *Priviledges* be great; and, against men that would spoile you of them, it is just and honourable to plead and assert them. But take heed you use them not as any *Plea in barre* against God. He is content that you enjoy yours; let none prevaile with you to purloine from him any thing that is his. Stand not upon termes with *Jesus Christ*, as if any Prescriptions or Laws of the Kingdom (although never so fundamentall) were sufficient Ground not to receive and obey the Laws of his Kingdom, which seem dissonant and different from yours. This is the high way to loose all, and *Christ* too. There is a time coming, and it is at hand, wherein all the Kingdoms of the Earth shall be the Lords; not by tempering his Laws to theirs, but by conforming theirs to his; not by blotting

ting out the words of Scripture, but by *breaking them to peeces* that oppose it. Now therefore, if *Kings* will not be wise; yet be *instructed ye Judges of the Earth*: You, I mean, that be the *Governours of our Israel*. Away with all *vain Thoughts* of the Vulgar. Do not think that your correspondence with that great City, your care for the external parts of Religion, your descent, your wisdom, your fasting, your utmost abilities and endeavours will or can do any thing, when rested upon, to stanch the issue of blood in this or the neighbouring Kingdoms. Take heed of those spirits of error, who wish faire, (*specious, pargetted, glosing words*) seek to make merchandize of you, beguiling unstable souls. Beware of those compliances with and indulgences to all sorts of Sects and Schismes now pleaded for both by word and writting, as if it were a part of *Christ's* Legacy and his peoples Liberty to be of what Religion they will; to be tolerated in any opinions never so erroneous and pernicious (untill further light:) that it is the Magistrates duty to protect them in that Liberty; and that the contrary thereunto is to persecute *Christ*. Hath God inserted this as one maine branch of his Grand Covenant with his people under the Gospell, *I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever*, * that is, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent? Zeph. 3. 9. Did *Christ* ascend up on high and give gifts unto men, and gave some, *Apostles*; some, *Prophets*; and some, *Evangelists*; and some, *Pastors and Teachers*, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of *Christ*, till we all come, *eis unum & nomen* into the Unity of the faith; and, is it persecution, and Anti-christianisme to engage all to Unity and Uniformity? Doth *Paul* bid the *Philippians* to beware of the Concision? Phil. 3. 2. Doth he beseech the *Romans* to mark those which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to avoid them; and that upon this ground, that they who are such, serve not the Lord *Jesus* but their own bellies; however by good words and faire speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple? Rom. 16. 17, 18. Doth he, writting to the *Galatians*, with, *I would they were even cut off*

2. Pet. 2. 3.
ver. 14. *ἀνθρώποις*
ἀλογαίς

* Jer. 32. 39.

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that trouble you, *Gal. 5. 12.* And is it such an heinous offence now, for the faithfull Servants of *Christ*, to Advise you to the same course? O Heavens I be astonish'd at this; and blinsh for the ignorance of some, and impudence of others, that dare so boldly presse for such a Toleration, which none but vain destructive *Thoughts* of carnall men can look upon, without indignation and horror. Beware how you hearken to those Empiricks and Syrens, who seek to charme the world into a deep sleep, by presenting their confidence of a necessity of complying with all sorts of Sectaries, yea, of trusting the sword in their hands, and to defer the settling of matters of Religion during the war, for fear of loosing the Godly party (as too many proudly stile themselves, by way of difference from all that are not of their opinions and wayes:) What is this, but to teach God a new forme of Politicks, to proclaime, that it is not alwayes safe to hold out the truth of the Gospell, and to command all men to imbrace it, but much safer to halt between two opinions? Belike *Jesiah* went beyond his bounds, when after himself had sworn a solemn Covenant to the Lord, he made all Judah and Benjamin to stand as is, and made all that were profess in Israel, to serve the Lord their God, *2. Chro. 34. 32, 33.* And *Asa*, much more, when he drew all the people into a Covenant, That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great; man or woman, *2. Chro. 15. 13.* But the ample and transcendent commendations which the Lord gives unto these pious Kings, especially in reference to their sincerity and zeale in reforming and settling of Religion in one uniforme way, may sufficiently warrant and encourage all Religious Magistrates, to take care that all under their Government, should all serve the Lord with one shoulder; this being not a tyranny over men, but the Priviledge of the Gospell. Beware yet, at last, of that *phumble*, that it is not yet time to build the Lords House. *Judah* paid dear for this, as I have heretofore shewed you at large, on *Psal. 76. 20.* and in my former *Sermon*, on this Text; and therefore shall spare my self and you the paines of enlarging at the present. Settle this in your hearts, Gods Truth, the true Worship and

Disci-

of the Thoughts.

Discipline of *Christ*, set up and established in one uniforme way, never prejudiced any nation or State (where it had free passage) in the least degree, but hath ever been their safety, happinesse, and honour. It is error, (how much soever cryed up,) not Truth (how much soever cryed down and blasphemed) that makes and foment rents and factions. It is he that is not with *Christ*, that scattered abroad*. Truth * *Mat. 12.30.*
hath a commanding power over the hearts of men: it guides their feet into wayes of peace; it heales breaches, brings in the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and makes ready a people prepared for the Lord. *Luk. 2. 17.* It will cause all error to fall before it, as *Dagon* before the *Ark*, and to vanish, as dimme candle light before the Sun in his strength. Wherefore, Get ye up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord, *Hag. 1. 8.* Set up *Christ's* Kingdom, hasten the setting of a Godly Discipline, and then take this for your reward, I am with you, saith the Lord*: and, from this day will I blesse you. * *Hag. 1. 13. sup. 2. 19.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

(Pag. 2. lin. 34. read *huc*. and in marge לל for לל. pag. 6. lin. 3. for *animi* read *cordis*, and dele *cognatio*. Ibid. lin. 35. read *ad*. pag. 36. lin. 17. for *intended*, read *threatened*.